



Illustration by Bonnie Heidel
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ASTRAGALUS LACKSCHEWITZII **LACKSCHEWITZ' MILKVETCH**

Lackschewitz' Milkvetch is a low and loosely tufted or matted perennial, with prostrate or ascending stems less than 10 cm long, arising from a branched rootcrown. Leaves are alternate on the stem, 2.2-5.8 cm long, with 15-23 ovate or elliptic leaflets; the upper leaflet surface is glabrous and the lower surface and outer margins have short hairs. The 3-5 pea like flowers are borne in an open, upright inflorescence that often becomes prostrate as fruits mature. Petals are 8.5-11.2 mm long and purplish blue. The calyx is 2.5-3.8 mm long and covered with uniformly short, straight black hairs sometimes intermixed with white. The oval or elliptic pod is 9-11.2 mm long, curved upward, and triangular in cross section, with a groove at the bottom, and covered with short hairs. Flowering and fruiting in July-August.

The other two *ASTRAGALUS* species that are small, low-growing species on limestone at high elevations in northwestern Montana are *A. ALPINUS* and *A. BOURGOVII*. The former differs from *A. LACKSCHEWITZII* in that it has leaflets which are blunt at the tip and pods that are almost completely divided into two chambers. The latter differs in that it has pods which are oval in cross-section.